THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) There is a district Rehabilitation Centre functioning at Vijayawada and four District Disability Rehabilitation Centres have been set up at Krishna, Anantpur, Visakhapatnam and Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh.

(d) The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation provides soft loan for self employment ventures. Under the Scheme to Promote voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities, financial assistance is provided to Non-Governmental Organizations for running manpower development programmes in the field of rehabilitation and special schools for children with disabilities. A National Scholarship Scheme for Persons with Disabilities for pursuing higher and technical education has been introduced this year.

Reservation for economically backward classes in Rajasthan

112. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the decision taken by the Government of Rajasthan to extend 14 per cent reservation to the Economically Backward Classes; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and by when a decision is likely to be taken up in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SATYA NARAYAN JATIYA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Government proposes to constitute a Commission to study and recommend reservation for Economically Backward Classes not covered by the present reservation policy.

Step motherly treatment to social sectors

113. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Social Watch India has arrived at a conclusion in its

first Citizens Report on Governance and Development, 2003, after assessing the policies on health, education and poverty alleviation in the context of globalisation that Government give a step motherly treatment to the social sectors and its policies making the already marginalized people victims of multidimensional deprivations; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and the measures taken to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI): (a) and (b) Social Watch India Citizens Report on Governance and Development 2003 was published by Centre for Youth and Social Development,. Bhubaneshwar and National Centre for Advocacy Studies, Pune. These are independent agencies and they have based their conclusions on their assessment of policies and programmes of the Union Government mainly with reference to the year, 2002. While the Government of India gives due consideration to all aspects of development, its sectoral allocation of resources is dependent on national priorities and availability of funds.

National conference on educational and economic development of minorities

†114. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a national level conference on the educational and economic development of the minorities was held in New Delhi on the 3rd May, 2003 with the efforts of the Maulana Azad Shiksha Pratisthan and the Central Wakf Council; and

(b) if so, the conclusions and decisions arrived thereat?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SATYA NARAYAN JATIYA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Hon'ble Prime Minister launched three new schemes of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation, *viz.* Maulana Azad National Scholarship Scheme for Meritorious Girl Students belonging to Minorities, Scheme of establishment of Maulana Azad Sadbhawna Kendras and Maulana Azad National Literacy Awards mainly.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.